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TAGS: [PARM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KHDP](#) [PINR](#) [AO](#)
SUBJECT: ANGOLA: AGING ARSENAL THREATENS CIVILIANS

Classified By: CDA FRANCISCO FERNANDEZ FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

¶1. (C) Summary: Recent visits to Angolan Air Force ammunition storage facilities found inadequate storage practices for the vast remnants of its Soviet-era arsenal. The Angolan military's limited stockpile destruction capacity has prompted them to turn to NGOs such as HALO Trust for assistance. HALO is receiving access to and destroying parts of the FAN's ammunition stockpiles, and is also poised to perform weapons destruction for the Army and National Police. However, the USG must also work to provide stockpile security and management training to the GRA to increase their knowledge and control of the risks in their ageing arsenal, including hundreds of time-expired MANPADS. End summary.

Angola's Ammo: The Good, the Bad, and the Dangerous

¶2. (C) Eric Patterson (PM/WRA), William Alberque (Defense Threat Reduction Agency) and Poloff visited HALO Trust work sites at Angolan Air Force (FAN) bases in Cabinda and Luanda on April 23 and 24, 2007. The team found insufficient storage and security of high-explosive ammunition and weapons systems in both locations. Although the military side of Luanda's International Airport contains some large, orderly and inventoried ammunition warehouses, it also has large piles of bombs, guided missile ammunition, and other military equipment lying in the sun or in unlocked and rusting shipping containers. A civilian school stands less than 50 yards from the unfenced ammunition storage area. The airport's outer perimeter fence has not deterred pilferers from the adjoining neighborhood; the backs were removed and silk parachutes cut out of fuel air bombs lying in a pile near the fence.

¶3. (U) The FAN's lack of capacity for safe weapons destruction and equipment necessary for destruction has led them to seek outside assistance to destroy unwanted items in their arsenal. HALO Trust's Weapons and Ammunition Disposal (WAD) Team has developed a strong relationship with the FAN though building on trust from past successes in small-scale weapons cutting programs and its extensive humanitarian demining program in Angola. In 2006 the FAN asked HALO to destroy ammunition and weapons systems at eight bases and military airports; that request has since expanded to 15 locations.

HALO's Strong Relationship Pays Off

¶4. (C) HALO's WAD Team is working with the FAN to identify and destroy the FAN's priority destruction items, namely obsolete aircraft bombs, missiles, and propellant. The visit confirmed that USG-funded HALO Trust is receiving access to FAN munitions, weapons, and high explosive stocks. They report that hundreds of MANPADS are stored at Luanda Airport; some are time expired, but only a few dozen are currently slated for destruction. Note: HALO continues to push the FAN for destruction of such items. End note.

¶15. (C) However, bureaucracy can impede HALO's identification, removal and destruction of ordinance. Their first step is a thorough site survey and inventory of items for destruction, as the FAN does not have an accurate national inventory of its weapons stockpiles. Permission must then be received to destroy identified items. At times plans are made to destroy certain weapons systems, such as a small stockpile of clearly inoperable MANPADS stored at Luanda's airport, but clearance to proceed with the destruction is denied. Permission is also required to use Central Demolition Sites (CDS). The CDS in Luanda and Cabinda had to be cleared of unexploded ordinance spread during previous incorrectly executed demolitions conducted by the Angolan military before they could be safely used by HALO. Note: Luanda's CDS is located far outside the city; given the highly explosive items slated for destruction and Luanda's legendary traffic jams, all movement to the CDS must take place at night. End note.

¶16. (C) HALO's WAD teams have a high-level working partnership with the FAN. In Cabinda, FAN airmen helped dismantle missile launchers and Field Grade FAN officers were on site to oversee and facilitate the process. At one point a Lieutenant Colonel was shoveling sand in the demolition pit to help speed things up. The FAN also airlifted HALO trucks, a crane and other equipment necessary to conduct demolitions to Cabinda.

¶17. (U) HALO has also met with the Angolan Army's National Director of Weapons and Ammunition to plan a large-scale destruction of excess weapons and ammunition. The Army is conducting a nation-wide inventory of all government stockpiles, and cooperation with HALO is pending the completion of this inventory. The National Police also plans to use HALO WAD teams to destroy weapons during their planned National Disarmament Campaign, although exact dates and form of that campaign remain unclear.

Cracking the Nut: The Path Forward on USG Priorities

¶18. (C) There appears to be tremendous scope for Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM) cooperation between the USG and the Angolan military, and such assistance is part of the USG's mil-mil workplan for Angola. HALO is already providing computer and software assistance to help the FAN inventory their stockpiles, and also agreed push the idea of the Defense Threat Reduction Agency's (DTRA) PSSM training to the FAN and Army. HALO will continue weapons destruction at 15 FAN sites, focusing on aircraft bombs, missiles, and other explosive remnants of war, while encouraging the FAN to expand its destruction of items such as MANPADS. Note: Following the Patterson visit, PM/WRA approved funding to HALO for a second USG funded WAD team in Angola. End note.

¶19. (C) PM/WRA is working with the Embassy and DHS to offer the GRA a MANPADS Assistance Visit. DTRA is also exploring providing multinational PSSM training to the GRA, in collaboration with NATO partners who have positive working relationships with the Angolan military, such as Belgium and Portugal. The Belgian DATT told Patterson and Alberque that they receive responses on mil-mil cooperation within two days of submitting proposals, and also stated that they send two Angolan military personnel per year to Belgium for weapons decommissioning training. Working with these countries could allow us to speed up discussions of these issues between the USG and GRA.

¶10. (C) Comment: MANPADS destruction is clearly a USG priority, one that the Angolans do not yet share, despite the fact that Angola's long civil war resulted in more MANPADS-related crashes of civilian and humanitarian aircraft than almost any other theater worldwide. HALO's productive working relationship with the FAN, Army, and National Police is making progress in the destruction of dangerous stockpiles, including outdated MANPADS, and they are cautiously hopeful they will be able to destroy a few hundred MANPADS and other stand-off weapons (e.g. S-5 rockets) over the next year. Post believes that a large-scale offer of a

gov-gov purchase of the most advanced MANPADS may not be welcomed by the GRA at this time, and such an offer could raise suspicions, halt the progress HALO is making on the issue, and slow the overall progress of the USG's mil-mil workplan. However, Post has agreed to revisit the issue in 6 months. End comment.
FERNANDEZ